595 husband and his first wife will also play, while bathing or near the
182 camp fire. She is in no way excluded from the gay life. Moreover, her slighter participation in relationships of amorous comradeship is compensated by a greater respectability and a certain authority over her young companions. It must not be forgotten (and we have
595 pointed it out in the study of the kinship system) that the polygamous
582 marriage presents a double aspect—the marriage of a man with a woman and with some "daughters" of the latter, or with a woman and the "sisters" of the latter. The respective situations of A1, a2 and a3 and a4 realize the two situations at the same time since, at least in one of the cases (with a4), it is the second oblique marriage within the same line. As example of the first type, we have the marriages of A32 and of A56; for the second type, one can also refer to the marriage of C20 (1).

1. Cf. above, p. 53.

595 The polygamous wives then, as a general rule, belong to a
571 younger generation. The first wife calls them "daughters" or of "little sisters," and they behave as such. A form of spontaneous grouping which one finds realized frequently is the union of the husband's daughters (by his first wife) and his young wives (polygamous). They form a sort of gay and carefree childlike society, but also a more or less subordinate society. We have found households comprised of two (A42, A57, A73, B1, B32, C20), three (A1,) and five (A32) wives. It does not seem that the number of wives is proportional to the social importance of the husband (even though polygamous union itself is conditioned by this), but is rather haphazard.

SEX LIFE

000 We shall begin by giving some information concerning organic activities.

514 Coughing, sneezing, spitting, blowing the nose, belching, ex-
515 pelling flatus, constitute operations which are not subject to any
576 etiquette, and which the vocabulary does not always clearly distinguish (thus: tolũ'ige, b1, to cough, and tolũtiore, b2, to sneeze; kasite, sneeze, and kasi'pe, c, spit, tarni'kititu, a1, to expel flatus or to defecate). All of these needs are satisfied publicly, without precaution, ritual gesture or formula, as much on the part of the executor as on that of the spectators. No attention is paid to them, and everything

[734] wife. We have already cited the case of the two little girls
593 a8 and a9 whose stepmother (a7) refuses to take care of them.
Their father (A6) must, then, assume many of the lesser func-
[842] tions. At the time of departure for a trip, it is he who prepares
the basket for the elder, measures on her the length of the tump
line, and shortens it thanks to the free end which he fastens
passing it several times through the holes of the basket-work.
869 It is also the father who tells the children the traditional stories.
538 And, with a view to shortening and making more intelligible
these often long and repetitious accounts, he applies himself
to transposing them in a style especially adapted for children.
Thus, the infant's version of the story of the Flood (1) is as

1. See below, p. 120, the complete version of this story.

follows:

15. wãitento dohonenãiram kãnaram hẽpatnẽ atãtene
nẽjdenkjathattene yafudõnle. (b1)
Everyone was dead! There was no one left! Not a man!
Everyone was dead! Nothing more!

595 Relationships of a particular nature exist in the case of
●571 polygamous marriage between the children of the first wife and
their young stepmothers. Even though the latter are called
"mother" or of "sister of the mother" by them, they live in a
state of companionship with them, especially with the girls,
which also extends to all the children of the group. We have
already dwelled on this society of girls and young wives who
take collective baths, go to defecate in a group, smoke to-
gether, joke and give themselves over to rather farfetched games,
such as spitting long jets of saliva in one another's face. An-
other example: a3 and a4 play with their stepdaughter a5. One
of them pushes her and throws her to the ground with such
violence that her head cracks against the ground and the little
one begins to shriek. The two young women heap mockeries
upon her. Finally, the youngest goes to drag her from the
ground almost by force and pushes her toward her mother, with-
out ceremony, like a package. These relationships are close,
appreciated, but without courtesy, like those which young boys
might have in our society. They rarely imply service or atten-
tion. Thus, A1 and his polygamous wives a3 and a4 divide a

595
57/ piece of small animal. a5 asks for part of it and a4 answers: "Let your father give you his." These relationships bring about
§56 a rather curious consequence: the young girls become independ-
595 ent more rapidly than the boys. They follow the young wives, take part in their activities, while the boys, left to themselves, timidly try to adapt themselves to the group but without great success, and usually remain, at least in earliest childhood, beside their mothers.

§57 [70] Considering now the relationships of children among themselves, the most striking characteristic is the absence of play. In certain groups (central and south), the children manufacture, although rarely, small objects of rolled or braided straw, but generally they know no other distraction than fights or contests which they do together, and lead an existence modeled on that of the adults. In fact, they carry on the normal day of the women: in the morning, preparing the manioc, then the cumaru nuts, bathing when it begins to get warm; when the sun is very high, retiring to the shade, and before night, gathering wood for the fire. Likewise, the girls learn to weave, they walk around, laugh, sleep. The little boys do not begin to play with little bows and imitate the male pursuits until much later (from 8 to 10 years on). But all become rapidly conscious of the fundamental and sometimes tragic problem of Nambikwara life, that of nourishment, and of the active role that is expected of them. They take part in the harvesting and collecting expeditions with great excitement. In time of need, it is not rare to see them seek their own food outside the camp, working to unearth roots, or walking in the grass on tiptoe, a large stripped branch in hand, to catch grasshoppers. The little girls know what an important role the women have in the economic life of the tribe, and are impatient to make themselves worthy of it.
[231 Thus, we find a young girl (b5) who tenderly carries a puppy
483] in the tump line that her mother uses for her little sister, and we make the remark:

16. uainuitte ufkɔrage
She caresses the little puppy?

Her mother answers me:

uefkuatnore uainuetuikade?ena tãjtniene
The little girl caresses the puppy (because she wishes) to raise it.

so which the little girl adds gravely:

In older versions, the old woman (since the old women share the magic powers of the men among the Nambikwara as also in other tribes) (4) was undoubtedly not content with measuring the

4. Cf. above, p. 101.

fall of water by the duration of the fall of her nuts, she actually provoked it by throwing them. Whatever the case may be, "magical projection" is probably found at the origin of the theme of the throwing of small fruits or grains in South American folklore.

[122] PSYCHOLOGICAL ATTITUDES

The Nambikwara offer the observer a very special psychological and moral aspect, and one which we have not found again either among their immediate neighbors--Paressi, tribes of Guaporé, and Tupi of the Gi-Parana--or among other South American tribes. It is worth an attempt to separate its principal characteristics. Few of the primitive South Americans display so much spontaneity and freedom in their behavior. Few manifest such ease in psychological relationships, and such grace of expression. Thus, in their relationships with the ethnologist, the informants introduce formulae which constitute true sociological inventions in order to respond to a new situation, on the part of individuals who do not use either a formula of greeting or of leave-taking in their own social relationships:

60. tai undejretnĩ ta ekiredniẽ pã jiren undetniẽ
tatjene pã iritjani. (b1)
I am going to sleep, I am going away, you go to sleep,
I will stay, you go away.

Or to put an end to an interrogation of which they are weary:

61. iejũlana amnentiẽ hikənarigna iatjeu amdeniẽ
kənahãtiaj jedetniẽ. (b1)
This is useless, it must be left; one does not see
clearly any more, this is useless, let us leave it;
tomorrow we will talk.

Or again:

62. nakanajõnjani nãhin nalirjani. (b1)
I have forgotten, wait till I remember.

Their daily life is full of exuberance. It is not only in the games of ball that one hears joyous exclamations:

6: Levi-Strauss E-5 (1938-1939) 1943
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607 838

sometimes the fathers of several children, walking together at dusk and tenderly embracing each other; always

tarãtę ialãsiętę

(these are) brothers-in-law embracing (each other).

Certain games, too, such as the "scratch game" (in which the opponents try to scratch each other especially in the face), are commonly played by brothers-in-law.

607 571

But the close relationship between "cross cousins actually or potentially allied through a sister's marriage"—the more accurate translation of the aboriginal term for brother-in-law—may extend far beyond the family tie. Actually, it is sometimes used to establish between individuals not belonging to the same kin group new links of a special nature, the function of which is to amalgamate into a single familial unit several formerly unrelated groups. This is brought out clearly in the following case.

184 571 621 197 731

During the past twenty years, several epidemics nearly destroyed the central, northern and western divisions of the Nambikuara. Several groups were decimated to such an extent that they could no longer successfully maintain a socially autonomous existence. In the hope of reconstituting functioning units, some of these, therefore, attempted to join forces, In the course of our field-work we met and worked with such a merged group made up of seventeen individuals using the northern dialect (*Sabãnę* group) and thirty-four using the central dialect (*Tarãndę* group). Each of the originally distinct groups, however, lived under the guidance of its own chief, although both leaders closely cooperated. It is probable that the demographic crisis did not by itself account for this situation, since the people of the second group formed merely a fraction of a more numerous unit from which it had split off for reasons unknown to us. However, from several events which occurred during our stay with them, we deduced that the break had been caused by political dissention, the details of which remained obscure to us. In any event, these groups now travelled and lived together although two separate but contiguous camps were maintained in which the families formed distinct circles, each around its own fire. The most amazing feature of this curious organization was that the two groups did not speak the same language and were able to understand one another only through interpreters; fortunately, one or two individuals belonging to each group had sufficient knowledge of the other dialect to act as intermediaries. Even the two chiefs could not communicate directly. The problem of whether these dialects belong to the same linguistic stock need not be raised here; but the Northern group undoubtedly must be classified with the Nambikuara cultural family because of the similarities of material culture and of the life pattern, and chiefly because of the psychological attitude of the people, who very evidently believed in their close affinity to the Central group.

6: Levi-Strauss E-5 (1938-1939) 1943
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571 607 A more fundamental problem raised by the union of the two groups, namely the nature of the relations to be established between their respective members, was solved by the common statement that all the male members of the Sabáŋę group were to be acknowledged as the "brothers-in-law" (*tarúlę*) of the male adults of the Tarúndę group, and, conversely, that the latter were to be acknowledged as "brothers-in-law" (*iópǫ*) by the former. Consequently, all the "wives" belonging to one group became the "sisters" of the "husbands" of the other, and the "sisters-in-law" of the latters' wives; and all children of both sexes in one group became the potential spouses of the children in the other. As a result, these two groups will be welded into a single consanguineous unit within two generations.

The conscious and systematic nature of this solution cannot be doubted. When asked for their kinship relation to any male adult of the allied group, the male informants, irrespective of the group to which they themselves belonged, never gave a different answer, but always emphasized that the question was meaningless since all the Sabáŋę men were their *tarúlę*, or all Tarúndę men their *iópǫ*. On the other hand, no one seemed to have a clear idea of the exact relationship between the women, the children, or the adults and the children of the two groups. Occasionally the correct theoretical relationship could be deduced; more frequently only the group name was given in reply to our queries: She is calling the other one "Sabáŋę"—or "Tarúndę." Thus it may be assumed that the system was conceived of and applied according to (and exclusively according to) the *tarúlę* (or *iópǫ*) relationship. This inference is rather important because, of course, the same result could have been achieved by other means.

If the sole aim of the system had been to ensure inter-marriage, it could have been brought about equally well in two other ways; perhaps we should say that two different interpretations might have been made of the same phenomenon. In the first place, the women might have been regarded as "sisters-in-law"; or, in the second place, all the men of one group and all the women of the other might have entered a brother-sister relationship. In both cases the result would have been the same as in the accepted interpretation, in which, indeed, these relationships are implied though not expressed. Nevertheless, the solution itself was actually based on the relationship between the male and his allied collaterals, the consequences of which must now be examined.

571 607 582 Two of the three possible interpretations implied the consideration of women; only one was purely masculine, and it is the latter which was adopted by the natives. The reason for the choice is obvious since the problem to be solved was a purely political one, concerning the chieftainship, which is exercised by men, rather than the normal mechanism of filiation, the pattern of which seems to be matrilineal. In a simple system of cross cousin marriage, such as that of the Nambikuara, the brother-in-law may be either the matri-

6: Levi-Strauss E-5 (1938-1939) 1943
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lateral or the patrilateral cross cousin; nevertheless, the chosen interpretation stresses the male side in Nambikuara society, or, let us say, it shows a strong tendency in this direction. At the same time we can see in such a solution a specifically social structure beginning to superimpose itself on the formerly simple familial units.

We do not intend in any way to base a theory of the origin of dual organizations on these restricted observations, the character of which is mainly anecdotal. However, this is a case where "the characteristic features of the sib organization are in some measure prefigured among sibless tribes";[1] as a matter of fact, in order to fulfil the main requirements of a system of exogamic moieties, it would be sufficient for the new unit, once fixed, to retain the recollection of its dual origin by preserving the habit of not mingling the camp fires.

Moreover, the extension of the "brother-in-law" relationship provides an instance of the increasingly superior position of the men within the group, since it is through the men that group alliances are brought about, just as wars are waged by men.

The preceding observations have a further value, since with their help we may be able to interpret sociological information found in the older literature on South America, especially that dealing with the Tupi of the Brazilian coast.

There are striking similarities between several features of the Nambikuara kinship system and what may be inferred about the ancient familial organization of the coastal Tupi. When describing small details of Nambikuara daily life, one is often tempted to quote Jean de Léry or Yves d'Evreux, so accurately do their words apply to certain live features of Nambikuara society, notwithstanding the fact that they were written four centuries before this culture became known. As a matter of fact, several metaphysical themes are common to both cultures and, indeed, certain names in the Nambikuara religious vocabulary have a conspicuously Tupi origin. The most important similarities, however, are those involving the kinship systems. In both cultures the same three principles of familial organization are stressed and are apparently similarly expressed: First the dichotomy of the parents' brothers and sisters between parallel uncles and aunts, called "fathers" and "mothers," and cross uncles and aunts, called "fathers-in-law" and "mothers-in-law;" secondly, the marriage of cross cousins with the correlative assimilation of parallel cousins to "brothers" and "sisters"; and, finally, the avuncular marriage, which, among the ancient Tupi, seems to have taken the form of a preferential union between the mother's brother and the sister's daughter.

An excellent text by Anchieta gives evidence of the occurrence of the first principle, as well as showing signs of the existence of the other two:

[1] Robert H. Lowie, *Family and Sib* (American Anthropologist, Vol. 21), p. 28.